

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, ranking members Miner and France and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Martin Isaac and I live in Trumbull CT. I'm a board member with CT Against Gun Violence and am here today to speak in support of CAGV's [CT Initiative to reduce community gun violence](#).

Specifically, I am testifying in support of the \$3.6 million included in the Governor's budget adjustment bill for the Department of Public Health to fund gun violence prevention programs

Over the years, this legislative body has passed strong gun laws to protect the populace. And it's worked. As ranked by the [Giffords organization](#), CT is ranked 3rd in their gun safety index and 45th for gun death rates per capita. That is not a surprise – strong gun laws have always meant lower death rates.

And while on a comparative basis that sounds good, last year gun homicides in our state were the highest in 25 years, nearly double the level in 2018 – and this brutal carnage demands a response.

The primary issue we need to address is the violence in our cities. It is horrific. It does not often make the news, but day after day, month after month, our city residents are terrorized by shootings and death.

The sad fact is it does not have to be this way.

Years ago, we did not understand how to stop violence in our cities. Carnage was unanswered because seemingly there were no answers. [That is not where we stand today](#)

Connecticut needs to invest in intervention and prevention mechanisms -- Evidence based programs with a proven record of success. These programs work because they are aimed at individuals at high risk of perpetrating or being victims of gun violence in high-violence communities.

We need to have the will to put resources and structure in place to put these solutions to work here in Connecticut.

Many of you in this room are familiar with one of these programs, Project Longevity. The good news is that there are additional programs that are even more effective. Hospital-based violence intervention and violence interrupters, have [proven track records](#) of reducing gun violence.

We have a moral calling to act.

I understand this is a budget discussion. Financially, it is equally compelling.

It's [estimated](#) that gun violence (of all kinds) costs Connecticut taxpayers between [\\$60 and \\$90 million annually](#), and carries a yearly societal cost of up to \$1.2 billion. Every dollar invested in saving lives saves money too.

It is time Connecticut puts into place an evidence-based mechanism to deploy resources to save lives. I urge the legislature to create an Office of Gun Violence Prevention in the Department of Public Health and commit to permanently funding this initiative.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify today.

Sincerely

Martin Isaac